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Studies and Evaluation on the Translations of the Holy Qur'an in Bengali During the British Colonial Time in the Indian Sub-Continent¹

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Abstract

After the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, Almighty Allah commanded human society to study and think about the Qur'an. He encouraged human society to teach, preach and spread the teachings of the Qur'an. But because the language of the Qur'an is Arabic, if non-Arabs want to learn the Qur'an, they may have to learn the Qur'an by learning the Arabic language well or they have to translate the Qur'an into their mother tongue. This study was conducted to mention those who have been trying to make the Qur'an comprehensible to about three hundred million Bengali speakers at different times. As part of a larger study, the earliest Bengali translations are featured in this article.

Many of these translators have tried to present the basic teachings of the Qur'an in an easy way for people to adhere to the basic spirit of the Qur'an. Many have succeeded in their endeavors. And some non-Muslims are also seen translating, who, rather than believing in the faith of the Qur'an, translate it to find out any weakness of the Qur'an as part of their own religious agenda. While there are many translations of the Qur'an in Bangladesh and proper cataloging of translations, the quality of translations and translators has not been evaluated in the past. Therefore, in this research, the translation work that has been carried out in Bangladesh for the first time has been listed and evaluated.

Keywords: Studies, Translations, The Holy Qur'an, Bengali, Bangladesh, British Colonial Time.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Islam in Bengal and India began at the time of the Companions of the prophet and continued later through Arab da'i and traders. For this reason, the roots of love and respect for Islam among the people of this region are very deep. Despite the spread of Islam by Arab da'i and traders in this country until the conquest of Bengal in 1203 by the Ikhtiyar Uddin Mohammad Bakhtiyar Khilji in the eighth century, no separate political victory was achieved for the Muslims. The political structure of the Muslims in this country began with the conquest of Bengal by the Muslim hero, Ikhtiyar Uddin Mohammad Bakhtiyar Khilji, who came from Central Asia. This continued until the British East India Company invaded the country in 1757.

¹ This article was extracted from the author's doctoral thesis titled "Bengalce Kur'an-I Kerim Çeviri Çalışmaları ve Değerlendirmesi".

The region of Bengal was an attractive business field for Arab traders for being rich in natural resources. Muslims from different parts of the world came here and settled permanently due to the fair job security environment provided by the Muslim rulers and the abundance of natural resources. As a result of the restrictions imposed on Muslims at different times in some regions, especially India and Myanmar, the Muslims of these regions found Bangladesh safe to live in. Bangladesh become one of the most populated countries in the world although Bangladesh is a small country by land. This country is recognized as a less developing Muslim country through the mismanagement of the supporters of the imperialist world political leaders although still it is rich in natural and human resources today.

The Muslim rule in this country has also greatly enriched the Bengali language. About ten thousand Arabic and Persian words are used in today's Bengali language. Bengali has a total of 50 letters, including 11 vowels and 39 consonants. Bengali has different numbers like Arabic and English. About three hundred million people, including Bangladesh, Arakan, and several states of India, speak Bengali, which has a history of nearly five thousand years. As the majority of the total population is Muslim, the advancement of the translation and interpretation of the Qur'an in Bengali needs of the time. Studies on these translations done at the beginning of the Qur'an translation era are very rare in Bangladesh today and it is needed to consider those translations as academic research.

Meanwhile, various translations of the Holy Qur'an, as well as some commentaries, were translated and published in Bengal. Some of the world's most famous Arabic commentaries have been translated into Bengali. According to the data shown in various sources, there are sixteen translations during the British colonial period of the Bengal region. Since there was no institutional support at that time, translations of the Qur'an are carried on with personal initiative. On the one hand, the restrictions of the British power, on the other hand, the negative attitude of the scholars on the translation of the holy Qur'an are the reasons for the lack of holy Qur'an translation studies.

The main problem in this research is that since all the translators are in the early stage of Qur'an translation work, not enough information about their translations or translators has been preserved. Some translators have enough information saved while some translators don't. As a result, in the field of research, we have to rely on the translations available in the market or libraries and the research of various researchers on them.

For the convenience of research, I have divided the work of Qur'an translation in Bangladesh into three parts namely the first phase of translation i.e. the British period, the Pakistan period, and the last Bangladesh period. In this study, the first stage of Qur'an translation, i.e., the important

translations will be evaluated with reference to the translation circle made during the British period.

However, not only in other languages but also in Bengali, academic research is scarce on all these translations. In conclusion, it is necessary to evaluate how skilled the translators of Allah's word are in translation, and how fluent the translator is in terms of made understanding the Bengali language, even if the translator is proficient in Arabic. This article will be explained the translations of the Qur'an into Bengali and the issue of translators during the British colonial period.

STUDIES ON THE TRANSLATIONS OF THE HOLY QUR'AN IN BENGALI DURING THE BRITISH COLONIAL TIME IN THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT

1. Amiruddin Bashunia

Amiruddin Bashunia was the first person whose name comes to the fore in the translation of Al-Qur'an into Bengali. We have indirect information about Amiruddin Bashunia and we do not have a copy of the translated juz of Bashunia. Abdul Karim Sahitya Bisharad (1871-1953), a former writer in Bangladesh's Chittagong region, described in his book 'Bangla Prachin Pothier biboron,' that Amiruddin Bashunia had translated first in Bengali the last juz of the holy Qur'an.

It is known that the published translation of Amiruddin Bashunia was published in 1808/9. Many authors have written about the translation of Amiruddin Bashunia, one of them, a writer named Hamid Ali, in an article in which he evaluated the translation issue in 1909, mentions that the translation of Amiruddin was made exactly a century ago, which means in 1808. According to the information given by Abdul Karim (1871-1953); Next to Sheikh Fazlul Kerim of Rangpurun Kakina, there was only one copy of the last part of the translation made by Amiruddin Bashunia. Basunia's translation was Ampara's poetic translation into Bengali literature.²

Although Amiruddin Bashunia translated it in 1808/9, his book was published after 1866. Normally Islamic scholars translated the suras of 30. Juz of the Qur'an, because they were very short and were read in prayer mostly. That's why Muslim scholars in Islamic countries gave priority to translating the 30. Juz of Qur'an. Perhaps if time had been enough, they would have translated the entire Qur'an.³

² Dr. Mohammad Abdul Adud, *Bangla vashai Qur'an Chorchā; Othpotti o Kromo Bikash, Al Qur'an International Rechersh Academy, Dhaka, 2009, 95.*

³ Mofakhkhar Hussain Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Proçarar İtihaş o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, Dhaka: Bangla Academy, 1997.P 33.

2. Girish Chandra Shen (1834-1910)

Girish Chandra Shen was born in 1834 in the village of Panchdona in Narshingdi. In the neighboring village of Shankhola (শানখোলা), Girish Chandra Shen began learning Persian from a well-known Persian-speaking person named Krishna Chandra Ray. Within a few years, he had become quite dominant in Persian.

In 1876, Girish Chandra Shen went to Lucknow with the support of Brahmo Samaj for Arabic education and took Arabic grammar and Diwan-i-Hafiz lessons from Ehsan Ali, who knew Arabic. When he returned from Lucknow to Calcutta, he had a little more religious education from an alim. He later studied Arabic history and literature with Mawlana Alimuddin at Nalgola (নলগোলা) in Dhaka.⁴ He learned Persian and Sanskrit throughout his education life.

Girish Chandra Shen was originally a Hindu. Later, with the encouragement of Keshab Chandra Shen (1838-1884), he converted to Brahmanism. It is reported that he read Persian books such as Bostan, Gulistan, and Pendname easily. With the encouragement and inspiration of Keshab Chandra Shen, he devoted himself to the research of Islamic literature. The famous book of Girish Chandra, Tapasmala তপসমালা (1880-1895), is a biography of 96 saints in the light of Sheikh Fariduddin Attar's book "Tazkiratul Awliya" written in Persian. He published a translation of almost half of the Mishkat Sharif under the title Hadis-Porbo Bivhag (1892). Another important book is Tattvaratnamala তত্ত্বরত্নমালা (1906). This is compiled from the famous Persian books Mantekuttayeb মানতেকুত্বায়েব by Sheikh Fariduddin Attar and Masnabi Sharif মসনবী শরীফ by Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi.⁵

The first complete translation of the Qur'an in Bengali was made in 1885 by the Brahmin priest Girish Chandra Shen. The first volume was published by Sritarinicharan Bishvas (শ্রীতারিণীচরণ বিশ্বাস) in 1882 on the Charu Jantro (a printing system) of Sahar Sherpur. After it was printed, a copy was delivered to the Publication Register Office on December 12, 1882.

At that time, since the printing machine in Sherpur was not inclusive and the journey from Mymensingh, the province where he lived at the time of translation, to Sherpur was not easy, he took back the Print from Sherpur charu Jantro and delivered it to Sriram Sharvashsha Bhattacharja's Bidhan Candra printing house in Calcutta and had published. The second volume was printed and published in the same place. While Girish Candra Shen had planned to translate every juz of the Qur'an once a month to facilitate printing, it was only possible to complete one-third of the translation between December 1881 and February 1883. The first volume of this

⁴ Somobaru Chandra Mohanta, *Girish Chandra Shen*, https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php/Sen,_Girish_Chandra, Date of access 30.12.2020.

⁵ Somobaru Chandra Mohanta, *Girish Chandra Shen*, https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php/Sen,_Girish_Chandra, Date of access 31.10.2022.

translation was published in 1881, from Surah Fatiha to the end of Surah At-Tawba, between 1-384 pages.

The second volume was completed in May 1884, from Sura Yunus to sura An Naml, on pages 385-760 of the translation. The third volume, the last part of the translation, which covers a total of 87 suras from Surah al-Qasas to Surah Nas, was 761-1201 pages of translation completed in the middle of 1885. This statement shows that his total translations were published in the four years from 1881 to mid-1885.

Meanwhile, many Muslims and non-Muslims took up the task of translating the Qur'an after that. That translation became popular among Muslims because it was linked to the translation of the original Arabic text of the Qur'an. The translation of Girish Chandra has almost become a stage in history because it has no Arabic text. However, this translation of Girish Chandra which was translated from the Brahmin perspective was published as the fourth edition by Sotinath Chetarji with the support of the Brahmin congregation. After this edition, it was republished in 1977 at the initiative of Rohul Amin Nizami, owner of Jhinok Publications in Dhaka.⁶

A lot of work has been done on Girish Chandra Shen, known as the first translator of the Holy Qur'an fully in Bengali. Books have been written about his life and work. While the translation was mass-published, many readers praised it, while some readers of the translation wrote letters of criticism to him. The translator probably included only letters in which his translation was praised as an appendix. But letters of criticism were carefully avoided because otherwise, the recognition of his translation would be adversely affected.⁷

When the translation started, some scholars interpreted it as a faithful, clear, true, and perfect translation, while some scholars criticized it as propaganda of the Brahma religion, a biased, incomplete translation. Faith is the condition for the purest and most faithful translation of the Qur'an. A translator who does not believe in Islam and the Qur'an cannot be pure and faithful in the translation of the Qur'an. Unless the Islamic belief, knowledge of theology, and the hadiths of the Prophet are known, the translator will not be able to translate the Qur'an. A person who cannot read the Qur'an correctly cannot have information about the translation of the Qur'an. If there is a slight change in pronunciation or irregular pauses, it can cause changes in the meaning of the verse of the Qur'an that distort the meaning.

Girish Chandra was unaware of the difficulties and complexity of translating the Qur'an. He also started with little preparation to fulfil his master's task rather than of his own will. Therefore, it seems that he knows Urdu well. While translating, Girish Chandra Shen translated it based on the Urdu translations of the Qur'an by Shah Abdul Kadir and Shah Rafiuddin. His knowledge of

⁶ Shen, Girish Chandra. *Qur'an Sharif Onubad*, Dhaka: Dibbyo Prokash, 2008. 792.

⁷ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bongnobader Shotoborsho*, 40.

Persian and Urdu was helpful for his use of translation and commentary, although his Arabic was sparse. It is very important to be able to complete the lack of pragmatic terminology, especially in the translation of the Qur'an, in such translation works. This affliction appears in both Bengali and English.

Every translator accepts that the translation of the Holy Qur'an, like any other translation, is extremely difficult. Since the Qur'an is a very sensitive divine book, the translator has to prepare for a long time before starting to translate the Qur'an. Girish Chandra Shen, who did not know Arabic before, started to learn Arabic in 1876 and took up the subject of translation in 1881. He first published a small magazine on the Qur'an in 1880. He then succeeded in translating the first volume of the Qur'an at the end of 1881. The time from starting to learn the Arabic language to translating the holy Qur'an took only four years. It is rare to be able to translate the Qur'an in such a short time. In this context, Girish Candra Shen deserved his success.

This information may be enough to evaluate the translation of Girish Candra. It is surprising how difficult it is to translate various parts of the Qur'an, even for those who normally study the Arabic language, and religious education throughout their life and read it regularly every day, so it is surprising that Girish Chandra tried to translate the Qur'an without having sufficient skills in Arabic. When translating a book or an article from any language, the translator must have full knowledge and authority in that language. Moreover, belief plays an important role in translating the Qur'an. While it is necessary to be very meticulous about the meaning of the original text in the translation, Girish Candra could not show this meticulousness according to many Qur'an researchers.

3. Naimiddin (1832-1908)

Naimuddin was born in 1832 in the village of Kortia Sabujgram in the Mymensingh district of Bangladesh. He had acquired deep knowledge by visiting places like Murshidabad,⁸ Allahabad,⁹ Jonpur,¹⁰ Gazipur, Delhi, Agra, etc. and reading important Islamic books from the scholars there. Naimuddin, who speaks Arabic, Persian, Bengali, Urdu and he was known as journalist, debater, preacher and pious. He died in 1908.

Naimuddin wrote thirty books on Islam including the translation of the Qur'an. After the Brahma priest Girish Chandra Shen's translation of the Qur'an, Naimuddin also began to translate the Qur'an. He had previously written several books on religious subjects. His first book in Bengali, Zubdatu Masail, was published in 1873. Apart from Zobdatul Masail, Fatawa Alamgiri Vol. 1

⁸ Murshidabad is a town in the Indian state of West Bengal. It is located on the east bank of the Hooghly River, which is a dispersal of the Ganges River.

⁹ Officially known as Prayagraj and also known as Ilahabad and Prayag, Allahabad is a metropolis in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.

¹⁰ It is a city and municipal corporation in the Jaunpur district in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.

(1884), Vol. 2 (1887), Vol. 3 (1889), Vol. 4 (1892), Kalimatul Kufr (1890). Akir Zuhor (1892), Siratul Mustakim (1893), Tarabih (1894), Witir 1894), Adillai Hanefiya (1894), Mawlid Sharif 1895, Rafa Yadayn (1896), Dhormer Lathi 1903) were written.¹¹

He translated the holy Qur'an into Bengali and was published as a volume in 1887. The Bengali translation has been printed with a brief commentary below the Arabic of each verse. The first volume of the translation, which was published in 1887, had 48 pages, the second volume was published in 1888 with 96 pages, and the third volume of the translation was published in 1890 with 112 pages. In these three volumes, it was translated from the chapter of Fatiha to the 54th verse of Baqara. However, when there were some publication errors and deficiencies in the translation language, the publication was stopped, and the distributed copies were collected. It was reprinted after studying and editing the translations.¹² However, in the revised edition of the translation, Surah Fatiha and Surah Al-Baqara appear at the beginning of 202 verses. The second volume continued from the 203 verses of the sura al-Baqara to the 76th verse of the sura of Nisa and was published in 1892.

After the publication of the second volume, Patron Hafiz Mahmud Ali Khan asked the translator to postpone the remaining volumes and translate the 30. juz because of the suras are short and these suras are read more in prayer. When the translator saw this recommendation of Mahmud Ali Han is appropriate, he interrupted the translation of the Qur'an from the beginning and completed the last part of the translation was completed in April 1893.¹³

After translating the 30. volume, Naimuddin left the Qur'an unfinished and continued to translate it from where he had postponed, and translated it from the 77th verse of the Nisa to the 120th verse of the chapter Maida within a year, named it the "Third Volume" and published it in Karatiya in 1894.

The story of Yusuf Zulayha was very famous in the Bengal myth culture. However, since it was not spread from the right source, it contained false information and expressions that were not suitable for a prophet. That's why Naimuddin translated Surah Yusuf and wrote its commentary with the necessary notes under it. This translation was published by Mir Athar Ali of Mahmudiya Publishing House in 1895. In the religious culture of Bengal, people recited "panje sura", Yasin, Ar-Rahman, Mulk, Muzammil, and Dahar suras daily. He translated these five suras and published them together with their footnotes and commentaries, thinking that it would be more beneficial to read these suras by knowing their meanings, in addition to reading them on their faces. Meanwhile, published his books like Mawlud-i Sharif (1895) Rafa'a -Yadayn (1896),

¹¹ Khan, Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho, 55.

¹² Khan, Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho, 57.

¹³ Khan, Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho, 58.

Esbate Akherozzohar (1897), Buhari Sharif, Volume I (1898), Bekhari Sharif, Volume 2 (1898) Dhormer Lathi (1903) and Adillaye Hanefiye (1904).¹⁴

After Mahmud Ali's death, Nimuddin took a break from his translation work, left Kortaya, went to Calcutta, and soon after winning the sympathy and patronage of Khan Bahadur Mowlovi Rahim Baksh, one of the richest in Jalpaiguri, attempted to translate and print the Qur'an. He published the eighth and ninth juz of his translation in 1908. He died on 23 November 1908, before the translation of the tenth juz was finished. After Naimuddin's death, his sons Kasimuddin Ahmed and Fakhruddin Ahmed decided to continue translating and published the eleventh to the twenty-third juz in less than a year. While Naimuddin translated ten or eleven juz in twenty-two years (1887-1908), it was an enigma that his sons translated the eleventh to the twenty-third juz in less than a year. While it takes a long time to translate, print and publish a juz with notes and explanations, how is it possible to translate and print twelve juz in just short time?

“Many scholars have made some comments on the translation of Naimuddin. However, Muhammad Mansur Uddin, who made a true comment on this subject, wrote: He passed away after completing this translation from the beginning to the twenty-third juz. Before he died, he translated the last part of the Qur'an and the panje sura from the beginning of the Qur'an to the 23rd juz. However, he did not have the opportunity to print the other parts and his sons printed the remaining parts later.¹⁵

while non-Muslim translators interpreted the Qur'an and Bengal Muslims were alienated from their own religion with their wrong, misleading translations then Naimuddin mentioned it as "Illegal Practices and ignorant courage" and Naimuddin's translation of the Qur'an came to the fore.

However, Naimuddin put forth his own effort without criticizing the translations of previous non-Muslims, contemporaries, or predecessors. As a devout Muslim devoted to Islam, Naimuddin translated it to build Islam and Muslims on a strong foundation, and he was successful. But unfortunately, no copy of Naimuddin's translation remained on the market.

4. Abbas Ali (1859-1932)

Mawlana Abbas Ali, who made the first full translation of the Qur'an as a Muslim, was born in 1859 in the Chandipur village of Beshirhat Mohakuma, the district of Chabbish Pargana. After studying at primary school, he learned Arabic, Persian, and Urdu from his uncle Mawlana Munir Uddin and studied Arabic literature, Qur'an, Tafsir, and Hadith for fifteen years from Mawlana Abdur Rahman Kandahari at the madrasah in Zomidar village of Deldur in Tangail. After

¹⁴ Khan, Pobitro Qur'an Proçarer İtihaş o Bonganobader Shotoborsho, 59.

¹⁵ Khan, Pobitro Qur'an Proçarer İtihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho, 61.

completing his education, he worked as a teacher at Chandipur madrasah he attended for fifteen years in his own village, as well as working as a preacher of Islam in Pargana, Jashor, Khulna, Hooghly, Burdoman, etc.

Due to the serious shortage of books on Islam in Bengali while dealing with the preaching and teaching of Islam he concentrated on writing books on different aspects of Islam such as Maharram Utsav (1884), Mes'eleye Zaruriyye and Tarikaye Nabebiyee (1895), Mofidul Ahnaf (1903), Borkul Muwahhidin (1905), Fathul Azam (1909), Fathul Irak (1912), Fathul Misr (1912). After completing his education at the Calcutta Madrasah, Mawlana Akram Khan (1900) tried to publish a newspaper with the help of Mawlana Hacı Abdullah. Mawlana Akram Khan was appointed as the editor of the monthly magazine 'Muhammedi', owned by Hacı Abdullah. Along with Munshi Kerim Baksh, Mawlana Abbas Ali was the editor-in-chief of the journal. Mawlana Abbas Ali felt that lack of it because until then a complete translation of the Qur'an or Islamic books in Bengali was not produced in sufficient quantity by Muslims. In order to solve this deficiency, Mawlana Abbas Ali decided to make a translation and translated the Qur'an together with Mawlana Akram Khan and published the first volume in 1905, the second volume in 1906, and the third volume in 1907.

Translation work continued steadily, and each juz was printed separately as planned. However, after the third juz was published, the chapters up to the seventh juz were broadcast together and handed over to the book registration officer. From 1905 to 1907, it was translated into the seventh juz in three years. These are available in the British Library. For the same reason as Naimuddin, Mawlana Abbas Ali decided to stop the translation and translate the last juz and published the thirtieth juz in 1906. Later, from the 8th to the 29th, it was published in 1909 and delivered to the registry office.¹⁶

5. Mawlana Babur Ali (1874-1946)

Mawlana Babur Ali was born in 1874 in Joynogor Baishhata village of Chabbish Pargana province in a Hanafi-centreed family. Although Babur Ali was born into a Hanafi-centreed family, he introduced himself as a member of Ahl al-Hadith after receiving higher education in Calcutta, Bihar, and Delhi. Presumably, Mawlana Babur Ali was working at Altafi Press as an assistant to Mawlana Abbas Ali and Karim Baksh in the first years. His two books: Khotaba (1911) and Siyanatul Muminin fi raddi Sa'ikatol Muslemeen (1917) were published by Altafi Press.

¹⁶ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 67.

Later, when Mawlana Babor Ali came into close contact with the Council of Ahli Hadis, he was appointed as the first editor of the monthly magazine of the Council of Ahli Hadis. Babor Ali, as an editor, started to write the translation and commentary of the Qur'an, as well as publishing this magazine as a weekly in 1928. However, in 1930, when Maniruddin Anwari was appointed editor in his place, he moved away from his work at the journal. Presumably, Babur Ali retired from his career in the Ahl al-Hadith and began to live quietly in his own village for the rest of his life.”¹⁷

6. Khan Bahadur Taslimuddin Ahmed (1852-1927)

Khan Bahadur Taslimiddin Ahmed was born in 1852 in Darjeeling, West Bengal of India. His father's name was Munshi Tarikulla. He started his education life in Chandan Nogar village in Darjeeling district and graduated from District School in Rangpur in 1882, studying law at Presidency College. After working for a while as a lawyer in Purnia (পুর্ণিয়া), Darjeeling (দার্জিলিং), and Jalpaiguri (জলপাইগুড়ি), he started working in Rangpur in 1889. In 1927, Khan Bahadur Taslimuddin Ahmed passed away at the age of 75.¹⁸

Taslimuddin had begun to publish translations of the Qur'anic suras in various magazines before the Bengali translation of the Qur'an was published as a book from the beginning. The first translation of Taslimuddin was published in the journal named 'Islam Tabligh' in 1891, and various suras of his translation were published in the monthly journals Navnur and Basona. Thus, the publication of his translation continued in various newspapers and magazines until 1908.

We have separate comments on the beginning and completion of the translation of Taslimuddin. According to the information given in the book 'Bangla Shahitter Itibritto' written by Abdul Hay and Sayed Ali Ahsan, Khan Bahadur Taslimuddin started his translation of the Qur'an in 1901 and completed it in 1913. However, in Mufakkahr Hussain Khan's book 'Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihas o Bonganobader Shotoborsho' there is an interpretation that he translated the entire Qur'an in seventeen years, probably from 1891 to 1908.

Taslimuddin first published the twenty-ninth juz of the Qur'an in 1907 and the 30th juz in 1909. Later, Munshi Riyazuddin Ahmed published the 30th Juz of the Qur'an translated by Taslimuddin in the issue (the 7th year 1905) of "Islam procar" magazine.

Meanwhile, due to the First World War (1914-1918), along with other problems, the paper crisis started. Evaluating the process of closure of workplaces due to the war, he completed the missing works on the translation with the support of Mawlana Muhammed Muzemmil Haque, the manager of the Oriental printing house in Calcutta, in 1920 and published the first volume of the

¹⁷ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 71.

¹⁸ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 72.

Translation in 1922. In the first volume, the first ten juz of the Qur'an took place. In the second volume, which was published in 1923, a total of twenty suras, from Surah Yunus to Surah Ankabut, were included. The third volume, which includes a total of 85 suras from the sura Rum to the sura Nas, was published in 1925.

This translation is full of notes and is a neat translation. According to Mawlana Ojihuddin, the editor of the Khilafah newspaper, this translation of Taslimuddin can be compared to the Tafsir Jalalayin. He did not include the Arabic texts of the Qur'an in his translation. 'The reason for this is; Maybe it would be nice to include the Arabic text, but I added the numbers of juz, sura, and verse at the beginning of each page. The other reason why I didn't include the Arabic text is to ensure that Hindu readers can read it easily and that it can be carried in anyone's bag, taking it wherever they go in a respectful manner.'¹⁹

7. Rev. William Goldsack (1871-1957)

Goldsack joined the Australian Baptist Missionary Society in 1899 and specialized in languages before being placed in the mission centre of Pabna district in Bengal. As a member of the South Australian Baptist Missionary Society, Goldsack was a priest of Faridpor province, the centre of Christian preaching in Bangladesh. Influenced by George Henry Rouse, head of the Baptist Mission Press in Calcutta, West Bengal, he devoted himself to Islamic studies and literary studies. Goldsack had long worked as a priest. He started to work on the Qur'an in order to reveal the faults of the religion of Islam.²⁰

In 1911, he attended the Lucknow Conference of Christianized Muslim Missionaries and was elected to the Missionary continuation committee. He learned Arabic for six months at the missionary centre in Syria between 1917-1918 and then for six months in Cairo, Egypt. Dissatisfied with the district assignments of the Australian Baptist Missionary Society, he transferred himself to the British Baptist Missionary Society in 1912 at the time of his departure. Some of his works are 'The Origins of the Qur'an-An Inquiry into the Sources of Islam' (1907), The Qur'an in Islam (1906), Christ in Islam (1905), Muhammad in Islam (1916), The Bible in Islam (1922).

Goldsack, following the other translation studies in Bengali, translated the Qur'an piece by piece and published the first juz under the name "Alif Lam Mim Juz" in 1908 and the last juz in 1920. An index is added to the end of each ten juz and the names of the suras in it are given. In addition, the cover of each juz putted in English, with the Arabic verse first, then the Bengali translation and footnotes are putted. Back then, Calcutta's Baptist Missionary publishing house was the

¹⁹ Khan, Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho, 76.

²⁰ Rev. W. Gold Seck, *The Quran in Islam*, The Christian Literature Society London, 1906. (1-5)

highest quality publishing house in the Indian subcontinent. Christian Goldsack's attempt to translate the Qur'an had a specific goal. The translator tried to give some false information about Qur'an and Islam such as grammatical errors in the Qur'an, The Prophet was educated by the Christians and Islam gives "permission to lie" in some parts.²¹ Such Writing on Qur'an and Islam has made his intentions clear.

8. Khondokar Abul Fazal Abdul Karim (1875-1947)

Kondokar Abul Fazal Abdul Karim was born in 1875 in Sheratoli village of Deldoar in Tangail district. After receiving his first education from his father Kondokar Muhammed Sabit, he came to Dhaka to get higher education. According to the tradition of that time, Abdul Kerim was among those who received education in Dhaka under the auspices of the Nobab family, like other students. While Abdul Karim was still a student, he became the teacher of Novab Habibullah. After completing his education, Abdul Kerim returned to Tangail and started to work as an Arabic and Persian teacher at Bindhobashini Secondary School there. He later taught part-time Arabic and Persian at Tangail State College.

Abul Fazal Abdul Karim had done the full translation of the Holy Qur'an. In the translation of Abdul Karim, its Arabic text was also included. He was the headmaster of the secondary school. Later, he was appointed as a print editor in Arabic and Persian at the University of Calcutta.²²

Abul Fazal Abdul Karim started translating the Qur'an after quitting his job at the Secondary School, first translated the last part of the Qur'an and was published by Mohammad Ibrahim's Islamia Press in Dhaka in 1914. A copy of this translation has been submitted to the Registrar like any other translation and a copy will be found in the British Library.²³ A short four-page biography of the Prophet is included as an appendix at the end of the translation.

The last part has translated suras from 78 to 114 (from Surah An-Naba to Surah Nas). After translating the last juz, he started the translation from the first juz of the Qur'an and completed it in 1914 and published it from the same place. In this way, he translated the third juz without adding Arabic text. In 1924, when he gave these three volumes as a gift to Muhammad Abu Bakr, who was then the master and head of the Jamaat-i Ulema and Ancuman-i Waizin Hanafia, Abu Bakr said: "I read with great pleasure the translation of first three parts of the Holy Qur'an (up to Surah An'am) translated by Mawlana Kondokar Abul Fazil Abdul Kerim. and congratulate him. This is a translation that is written in an easier language so that the public can understand,

²¹ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bongnobader Shotoborsho*, 77.

²² Abdul Hay, Soyed Ali Ahsan, *Bangla Edebiyatın tarihi*, Ahmad publishing House, 11. Baskı, 2010, S 119.

²³ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bongnobader Shotoborsho*, 78.

annotated and comment where necessary, and it is a cause-based translation. In my opinion, this is a short, neat, and quality translation. My Muslim brothers and sisters can read and benefit from this translation in their mother tongue," he commented.²⁴ Kondokar Abul Fazil Abdul Kerim died on December 3, 1947 in Calcutta.

9. Munshi Korim Boksh (...-....)

While working as a proof-reader at Altafi Press, founded by Hacı Abdullah in Calcutta, Munshi Abdul Korim Boksh published the monthly 'Muhammadi' magazine together with Mawlana Abbas Ali and Mawlana Akram Khan in 1903. While working for many years, Munshi Karim Boksh also published Mawlana Abbas Ali's translation of the Qur'an from this publishing house. The first part of Munshi Korim Boksh's translation was published in 1916 by Munshi Abdullatif's Tarikayi Islam Press of Calcutta Jannagar Street, together with its Arabic translation and pronunciation. He himself had probably published the Qur'an in three volumes.²⁵

In the first years of the nineteenth century, the names of four different Korim Boksh, namely Korim Boksh, Munshi Korim Boksh, Muhammed Korim Boksh, and Korim Boksh Sardar, are mentioned in Bengali literature. Among them, Muhammed Korim Boksh wrote various works of the Qur'an, especially the Education of Civilization of the Qur'an (কোরআন শরীফের সভ্যতা), a pothi (poem) named Gulzar-i Ibrahim Adham. It is known that Muhammad Korim Boksh, who lived in the province of Tripura (now Comilla), was a preacher and a scholar who spoke Arabic well.

10. Rohul Amin (1892-1945)

Mawlana Rohul Amin was born in 1892 in Narayanpur village of Boshirhat district of Chobbish Porgona province. After receiving his first education under his father Munshi Gazi Dobiruddin, he was educated in Calcutta Madrasah. He died on November 2, 1945. Mawlana Rohul Amin, a scholar and preacher of tafsir, hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence, known as the "crown of the Bengal Scholars Community", was very famous in the Indian subcontinent. Rohul Amin would travel from one part of the Bengal region to the other and give sermons, who had a deep knowledge of the explanation of the Qur'an, hadith, and in fiqh issues. Rohul Amin was the head of the Bengal region of Jamaat-i Ulama-i Hind, who devoted his life to the preaching of Islam and social reform, was constantly working to resolve conflicts between Hindus and Muslims.

He wrote more than a hundred books on the Qur'an, hadith and fiqh, in addition to his religious teaching. After Rohul Amin's death, the Muslim newspaper wrote the following while describing

²⁴ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 77.

²⁵ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 82.

how successful he was as a student; “Thousands of students graduate and pass from Calcutta University and Calcutta Madrasa every year. However, more than one Fazlul Hoque from Calcutta University and more than one Rohul Amin from Calcutta Madrasah did not pass. It is not known when it will come next.”²⁶

While Mawlana Rohul Amin was learning the religion in his student years, he felt the lack of a proper and detailed Qur'an translation in Bengali. Rohul Amin started translating the 30th juz first, as previous translators had done, and his first translation was published by Muhammed Reajul Islam Press in Calcutta in 1917. After translating the last juz, he published the ‘Alif-Lam-Mim’ juz in 1925, starting with the first juz of the Qur'an, and the second and third juz in 1927. Unfortunately, Rohul Amin could not continue with his translation work, probably due to the intensity of his other works such as religious preaching, political engagements, and spiritual activities. In the translation made by Mawlana Rohul Amin, the reason for the revelation, the Arabic verse, the Bengali translation, the notes, and the commentaries were given below. In addition to his own explanations, he also included the answers to the mistakes made by Girish Chandra and Gold sack.²⁷

11. Abdul Hakim (1887-1957) and Ali Hasan

Abdul Hakim was born in 1887 in Nogor Shondordi village of Moksudpor, in the Gopalganj district. After he studied at Kashiyani (কাশিয়ানী) school, he started his job as a headmaster in Nogorkanda (নগরকান্দা) primary school after passing the teaching exam. He was encouraged by his father Abdul Ghani to write religious books. Abdul Hakim gained wisdom in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu languages over time.

The poet, novelist, journalist, and translator of the Qur'an Abdul Hakim went to Kolkata for work, his work began at the publishing house of Doctor Muhammad Shafi. In addition to his works here, his books *Asarussalat*, *Shari'atul Muslimin*, and *Mas'ala-Masa'il* and his pothi (poetry) works were met with great interest by the readers.

Abdul Hakim was appointed as the general secretary of ‘Anjuman-i Waizin-i Bengal’ in 1928. The head of the ‘Furfura Darbar Sharif’, Mawlana Abu Bakr, went to various cities and preached in the squares, and worked for the improvement of the society.²⁸

With the encouragement of Shar-i Bengal Fazlul Hoque (1873-1962), Abdul Hakim got involved in politics and became a member of the high council of "Nikil Bongo Krishok Proja Somiti," in 1930. In 1940 he was elected as the vice-president of the Muslim League for the Bengal region

²⁶ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 83.

²⁷ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 84

²⁸ Abul kalam Azad, *Bangla Vashai Tafsir Chorchha: Bisheshoto Tafsire Norul Qur'an*, 2013, 175.

and later as a member of the council of the All India Muslim League. Later he resigned from his post in the Muslim League before the partition of India and engaged in preaching and religious affairs to reform the society. Abdul Hakim died on January 8, 1957.

Although we cannot access much information about Ali Hasan, it is known to be the ancestral home of Ali Hasan is in the Manikgonj district of the Dhaka region.²⁹ Ali Hasan is famous for his book of fiqh 'Mas'ala shikka' (1914) and Shesh poygambar (1915). Abdul Hakim and Ali Ahsan commented on their translations: "Until now, no proper translation or quality commentary has been published that is suitable for the reading and understanding of the 30 million Bengali-speaking Muslims in Bangladesh. Muslims were exposed to an inaccurate translation of the non-Muslim Girish Chandra, which was close in thought to the Sanskrit language and religion. Although most of our Muslim scholars were fluent in Arabic, Urdu, and Persian, their translations were not easily understood by the public, as they did not know modern Bengali well. Because of this deficiency, the universal messages of the Qur'an, which is the word of Almighty Allah, were not conveyed to the public."³⁰

In December 1922, the first part of the translation was published. The translator would complete the translation in three years, finishing one juz each month. However, this was not possible. He was able to complete the translation exactly sixteen years later in 1938. Another feature of Abdul Hakim and Ali Hasan's translation was that it was easily read and understood by the reader as it was full of Bengali enumerations, translations, footnotes and explanations besides the text of the Qur'an.³¹ This translation, completed in 1938, was highly appreciated by the readers, and Abdul Hay commented that this translation was beautiful in every way, as all the Bengali translations published so far have been used correctly, with the closest meaning of the Qur'an and a wonderful style of the language.³² Rabita-Al-Alam Al-Islami had decided to identify the best Bengali translations of the Qur'an and publish it for the Bengali-speaking Muslims living and working in Arabia. He reviewed all the translations and selected the translations of Abdul Hakim and Ali Hasan and published it in 1984.³³

12. Mawlana Mohammad Akram Khan (1868-1968)

Akram Khan was born on 7 June 1868 in the village of Hakimpur, Chobbish Pargana province, West Bengal. His father is Alhaj Gazi Mawlana Abdul Bari Khan and his mother is Begum Rabia

²⁹ Azad, *Bangla Vashai Tafsir Chorcha: Bisheshoto Tafsire Norul Qur'an*, 175.

³⁰ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 87.

³¹ Abdul Hay, Soyed Ali Ahsan, *Bangla Shahitter Itihash* Ahmad publishing House, 11. Baski, 2010, S 120.

³² Hay, Ahsan, *Bangla Shahitter Itihash*, 119

³³ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 92.

Khatun. After reading books such as the Qur'an, Gulistan, and Bostan in the family, he started his first education in the village school and continued his formal education in Alia Madrasah in Calcutta, successfully completing the final exam and graduating from here in 1900.

Mawlana Mohammad Akram Khan was a very famous person not only in Bangladesh but also in the Indian subcontinent as a journalist, writer, and Islamic thinker. The leader of the Aligor movement, Seyid Ahmed, was the father of Akram Khan's ideas. Akram Khan, who attended the 'Muslim Education Congress' organized by Sir Salimullah (1871-1915) in 1906, started to work to improve the situation of the Bengali Muslims.

It is not possible for Muslims to survive only by fine publications, quality prints, well-designed copies and pages, and by reading the Qur'an without understanding it. However, the Qur'an was revealed in order to understand it and apply it to life. That's why Akram Khan decided to make a translation for the correct understanding of the Qur'an. In order to be able to translate as he thought, he collaborated with Mawlana Abbas Ali and started his translation and tafsir work with Surah Fatiha and published this work in the newspaper Al-Islam in 1918, thus finishing the first juz.³⁴

Akram Khan translated the word (الحمد) Al-Hamdu to "gratitude (কৃতজ্ঞতা)". Akram Khan explained it this way: "Bengali translators normally used the word 'الحمد'" to mean 'praise (প্রশংসা)' in translations, but to me, the word 'gratitude (কৃতজ্ঞতা)' is more appropriate for the word Alhamdu." Probably due to disagreement on these issues, the two translators did not continue further translation work together. After translating Surah Fatiha, he tried to write the life of the Prophet for two years and finished the first volume of the book 'Mustafa Chorito'. After writing Mustafa Chorito, he started the "Caliphate and Tarke Mawlat (খেলাফাত ও তারকে মওলাত আন্দোলন)" movement.³⁵

The first volume of this work named the Qur'an with its Easy Bengali Translation and Interpretation (From Fatiha to the 42nd verse of Surah Nisa), was published in March 1959; the second volume (from the 43rd verse of the chapter of Nisa to the 129th verse of the chapter of At-Tawba) in July 1959; the third volume (from the chapter of Yunus to the 112th verse of the chapter of Anbiya) in August 1959; the fourth volume (from the chapter of Hajj to the 88th verse of the chapter of Saad) in October 1959; The fifth and final volume (from Sura Jum'a to Surah Nas) was published in February 1960.³⁶

Mawlana Akram Khan worked with a rationalist point of view in order to reveal the truth in his own translation and commentary, without pretending to be blind. In order to achieve this goal,

³⁴ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 94.

³⁵ Akram Khan, *Sorol Bangla Onubad o Bistarito Tafsir soho Qur'an Sharif*, Jhinok Postika, B. 1382. 3.

³⁶ Hay, Ahsan, *Bangla Shahitter Itihash*, 120.

while expressing his own arguments against some traditional beliefs and habits, he naturally made statements that the scholars did not like. Mawlana Abdus Sattar criticized the "absence of the truth named Tafsir" and Mawlana Azizul Hoque said "the misinterpretation of the Qur'an". Mawlana Rohul Amin put forward the first criticism on this subject and rejected Akram Khan's arguments. The translation and commentary of Mawlana Akram Khan could not gain popularity among the people, probably due to the objections of the scholars.³⁷

13. Fazlur Rahim Chowdhury 1896-1929)

Fazlur Rahim Chowdhury was born in 1896 and is the son of Ishak Chowdhury and Seyide Shamsunnisa Hanom, who owned a wealthy property in Borishal Ulaniya. He is the author of two works under the title Qur'aner Shubarna Kunjika and Qur'an Sharif.³⁸

After graduating from primary school at the English school in his home village, he started his education at the Borishal School, completing high school in 1912, a bachelor's degree in 1916, and a master's degree in Arabic literature from the Presidency College in 1919. Fazlur Rahim Chowdhury was married to Ruysi Begum, the daughter of Shar-i Bengal A.K.M.Fazlul Haque in 1926. He died on April 10, 1929, at the age of thirty-three, while undergoing gallbladder surgery. Fazlur Rahim, who was proficient in Bangla, Arabic, and English, translated the entire Qur'an before he passed away and published a compilation/copyright work of the Qur'an called Qur'aner Shubarna Kunjika in 1926. Among more than ten published books, the translation of the Qur'an with a short explanation is his greatest work. He died while undergoing surgery, after completing all the necessary preparations for publishing his work, the first volume of his translation, which was published in two volumes, and the second volume containing the sections from the sixteenth to the thirtieth. After his death, it was published his work from the Ishak Monjil publishing house of his older brother Fazlul Karim Chowdhury Olaniya. The subject of each sura and each ruku in this translation was put as a title, but it has no Arabic text. Footnotes from works such as Tafsir Calâleyn, Tafsîr kabîr, and Tafsir Kaşşâf were placed on each page of the translation, and short explanations where necessary.³⁹

14. Muhammad Nakibuddin Khan (1894-...)

Mohammed Nakibuddin Khan was born on April 14, 1894, in the village of Madpor (মাদপুর) in Shorisha (সরিষা) district of Chobbish Porgona, West Bengal. His father is Mohammed Maloar Khan and his mother is Hamida Banu. After passing primary school, he went to Calcutta to earn a

³⁷ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 100.

³⁸ Azad, *Bangla Vashai Tafsir Chorcha: Bisheshoto Tafsire Norul Qur'an*, 175.

³⁹ Azad, *Bangla Vashai Tafsir Chorcha: Bisheshoto Tafsire Norul Qur'an*, 175.

living and worked for a few years in the publishing house of Mawlana Abbas Ali. After returning to his village and teaching at the Chondipor Madrasa, he started publishing and selling Islamic books by founding a publishing company called "Minar".⁴⁰

While Nakibuddin was working in Calcutta, he prepared a translation of the Qur'an with some suras and published it in 1925 or 1926.⁴¹ After publishing the Panje surah, Nakibuddin started selling the translation of the Qur'an by Mawlana Abbas Ali and other books when the book trade started. At the same time, he published and sold his own books, 'Qur'ane Dua ve Ameliyat' (1925), Mas'ala Bidhan (1926), Allahar Nam Mahattyo (1926), Bonganubad Dua Gonjol Arsh o Dorud I Akbar (1928), Bonganubad Panje sura (1928), Bangla Meshkat Shorif 1st & 2nd Vol. After his experience in publishing and selling books, he felt the importance of translation of the Qur'an. Like others, Nakibuddin first translated "Ammpara", the last part of the Qur'an, and published it in 1938.⁴²

Nakibuddin completed and published the translation in 1949 by giving the Arabic text of the Qur'an at the beginning, adding the Bengali pronunciation below, the Bengali translation below, as well as the reason for the revelation and the short commentary of the verses in the footnotes.

Nakibuddin's translation was loved by the public for two reasons: First, it included the pronunciation of the Qur'an in Bengali letters. Those who could not read Arabic preferred to read the Qur'an in Bengali pronunciation. There was a pronunciation in Munshi Korim Boksh's translation before, but it was very difficult to find this translation in the market. The second reason was the advertisement of the translation. As Nakibuddin used to be a trader, he knew very well how important advertising was for the book to sell more.⁴³

15. Muhammad Kudrat-i Khuda (1900-1977)

Mohammad Kudrat-I Khuda was born in a pir⁴⁴ family in Margra (মার্গা) village of Birvom (বীরভূম) province of West Bengal in 1901. Kudrat-i Khuda's father, Shah Abdul Majid, and his mother, Fusida Hatun, had enrolled her child in a madrasah that provided hafiz training at the age of six, hoping to raise her child as a Islamic scholar, as was the tradition of wealthy families at that time. After memorizing the seventh juz of the Qur'an in two years in this madrasa, Kudrat-i Khuda was sent to the English secondary school, probably without completing his memorization. Later, he started his education in Calcutta Madrasah and graduated in 1918, and in 1924 he

⁴⁰ Khan, *Pobitro Kur'an Proçarer Itihaş o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 100.

⁴¹ Azad, *Bangla Vashai Tafsir Chorcha: Bisheshoto Tafsire Norul Qur'an*, 174.

⁴² Khan, *Pobitro Kur'an Proçarer Itihaş o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 101.

⁴³ Khan, *Pobitro Kur'an Proçarer Itihaş o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 103.

⁴⁴ It is a title for a Sufi spiritual guide. The title is often translated into English as "saint." In Sufism, a Pir's role is to guide and instruct his disciples on the Sufi path.

graduated from Calcutta Presidency College in chemistry. After completing his doctorate at the University of London, where he was sent with a government scholarship, Kudrat-i Khuda worked as a lecturer at Calcutta Presidency College from 1931 to 1947.

After leaving the country, he moved to East Pakistan (Bangladesh) in 1947 and was appointed as the director of the East Pakistan Public Education Centre. Kudrat-i Khuda founded the Science and Literature Council here and worked until he becomes retired in 1967. After the independence of Bangladesh, he was appointed as the head of the national education commission, and serious studies were produced. Kudrat-i Khuda, who delivered the commission report in 1974, died on November 4, 1977.

Muhammad Kudrat-i Khuda, who contributed a lot to his country in literature and education, was a famous scientist in the Indian Subcontinent. Although he was not an expert on Islam and the Qur'an, he made a great gain by writing many books in fields such as education, science, and literature, together with his studies in the Bengali language. Some of the important works of Kudret-i Huda are Bigganer Shorosh Kahini (science fiction), Bigganer Bicitro Kahini (Weird stories of science) Bigganer Shochona, (The Beginning of Science), Joybo Roshayon, (Biochemistry (4 volumes), Porbo Pakistaner Shilpo Vabona (The Industrial Potential of East Pakistan), Poromanu Porichiti (Introduction to the Atom), Bigganer Pohela Kotha (The First Word of Science), Postwar Bengal Agriculture and Industry, The Strangeness of Science. He also wrote some religious books including the Pobitro Qur'aner Poto kotha, and Ongari Jawara. His contribution to the development of Bengali nationalism was significant, including playing an active role in the independence movement.⁴⁵

Kudrat-i Khuda also discovered the method of obtaining dough from jute sticks and making high-quality partex boards from this dough. Kudrat-i Khuda's field of study was organic chemistry. He did research on herbal medicine, jute, salt, charcoal, soil, and minerals. He was able to successfully extract biochemical elements from local plants used as medicine.

According to Kudrat-i Khuda, who felt the need to translate the Qur'an from a scientific point of view, as a scientist who spent his childhood reading the Qur'an, Muslims could not progress because the Qur'an was not translated and explained from a scientific point of view. It is essential for Muslims to understand and apply the Qur'an in order for this society to mend its broken pride. However, since there has not been a translation of the Qur'an as he thought, Kudrat-i Khuda decided to translate it for Bengali speakers. However, because he found himself insufficient in Arabic, he started to translate and published it in 1947, with the help of Hafiz Abdul Hey, a

⁴⁵ Md Mahbub Murshed, *Muhammad Qudrat-i-Khuda*, http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Qudrat-i-Khuda,_Muhammad Date of access 10.12.2020.

professor of Arabic at the Presidency College, and with the support of translations in English and Urdu.

Doctor Kudrat-1 Khuda translated the Qur'an from a scientific point of view without following the previous interpretations while translating and explaining. He took responsibility for the views given in the footnotes and declared that the translation was free from the influence of previous commentaries. When the fourth verse of the Surah Fatiha of Kudrat-1 Khuda is translated, errors appear. *إِنَّا نَعْبُدُكَ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ* (We only serve you, we only seek help from you) translated the verse as "only him we serve and we only seek help from him". Scholars criticized him for translating "him and hem" instead of "you and you" in his address *إِيَّاكَ*.⁴⁶

He translated the part of *اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ* "Strike the stone with your staff" in the 60th verse of Surah Baqarah as "go to the mountains with your staff" in translation. In verse 34 of Surah Baqarah

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

And 'remember' when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam," so they all did—but not Iblîs, who refused and acted arrogantly, becoming unfaithful."⁴⁷

He mentioned in the footnote of this verse that, he did not believe in Iblis as a separate person and body. Although it is proved by Hadith that, Hz. Jibril (A) came to the Prophet in a human form, Kudrat-1 Khuda denied that Jibril came in human form. Anyway, the translation of Doctor Kudrat-1 Khuda in Bengali language was easy, but it was rejected by scholars because of such views.

He did not give the Arabic text but separated each part of the Qur'an as a volume, each sura a chapter, and each roku a paragraph, by placing the verse numbers at the beginning of each verse so that readers could easily read it. The translation begins as planned with an introduction called First Speech; this entry contained a twenty-five-page long article on Allah, the mystery of creation, and the messengers that were sent. In the first volume, the chapters of Fatiha, Alif Lam and Sayakul were included and were published by Muhammed Mahbube Huda from Calcutta United Publishing House in 1946. The translation of the second juz was published in 1947.⁴⁸ Doctor Kudrat-1 Khuda died in 1977 in Dhaka.

16. Osman Goni (...-...)

Osman Goni whose birth and death dates are unknown was a famous scholar. Osman Gani, a resident of Salda Ajhapor (সালদা আঝাপুর) in Bordhoman (বর্ধমান) province of West Bengal, completed from primary school and started his education at Aliya Madrasah in Calcutta in 1911.

⁴⁶ Kudrat-I Khuda, *Pobitro kur'aner potkotha*, Calcutta, 1945, 25.

⁴⁷ Al Baqara2/34.

⁴⁸ Hay, Ahsan, *Bangla Shahitter Itihash*, 120.

The greatest work of Osman Gani is the full translation of the Qur'an. In 1928, another book, called Ponchomoni, was published as a translation of Dua and "panje sura" in the Qur'an. He probably started his translation work as soon as his madrasa education was over and completed this translation in 1918. Osman Gani, after working for seventeen years to add the Bengali pronunciation of the Arabic text of the Qur'an, as well as the translation, prepared a manuscript book in 1935, but he could not continue the work due to mistakes.⁴⁹

17. Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman

Khan Bahadur Abdur Rahman published a translation of the Qur'an together with its Arabic in 1952. The translation language is easy, and footnotes are placed where necessary.⁵⁰

18. Nazrul Islam (1899-1976)

Kazi Nazrul Islam was born on May 24, 1899, in the village of Churulia in the Asansol of Burdwan province of West Bengal, India. His grandfather Kazi Amin Ullah and father Kazi Fakir Ahmed and his mother Zaheda Khatun. His father, Fakir Ahmad, was the imam of the neighborhood mosque and the keeper of the tomb. Nazrul is the eldest of three brothers and two sisters. Kazi Nazrul Islam's nickname was "Dukhu Mia" দুখু মিয়া. Nazrul worked as a muezzin in the neighborhood mosque in the village. As Nazrul was working with this education and training proses in his childhood, he was taught to read the Holy Qur'an, prayer, fast, haj, zakat, and so on. He had the opportunity to get to know the basic rituals of Islam at an early age. His father died in 1908 when Nazrul was only nine years old. After his father's death, his education was interrupted by the hardships of his family, and at the age of only ten he had to go to work to earn a living.

He remained in the army for about two and a half years, from late 1917 to April 1920. During this time, he had been promoted from Corporal General of the 49th Bengal Regiment to Quartermaster Havildar. He learned Persian from a 'Punjabi' alim of the regiment and continued his musical studies with various domestic and foreign musical instruments with his comrades, but also continued his studies of prose and poetry.

Nazrul's works while in the Karachi army house included the first prose Baundul's autobiography বাউণ্ডুলের আত্মকাহিনী, the first published poem Mukti (মুক্তি); Story: Hena (হেনা), donation of pain (ব্যথার দান), Meher Negar (মেহের নেগার), Ghomer Ghore (ঘুমের ঘোরে), Kabita Samadhi (কবিতা সমাধি), etc.

⁴⁹ Khan, *Pobitro Qur'an Procharer Itihash o Bonganobader Shotoborsho*, 107.

⁵⁰ Hay, Ahsan, *Bangla Shahitter Itihash*, 120.

According to this source, the beginning of Nazrul's literary practice is in this Karachi army house. While serving as a soldier in World War I, Nazrul's forces were supposed to go to Iraq. However, he did not have to go because the war had stopped. When the war ended in 1920, the 49th Bengal Regiment was disbanded. He then left military life and returned to Calcutta. Nazrul published the newspaper 'Dhumketu' (ধুমকেতু পত্রিকা) on August 12, 1922.⁵¹

On November 23, the Jugbani manuscript (যুগবাণী প্রবন্ধগ্রন্থ) was confiscated and he was arrested from Comilla on the same day. He was brought to Calcutta from Comilla after his arrest. On January 8, 1923, Nazrul testified in his defense as a prosecuted prisoner. Judge Swinhor, the chief prosecutor's office, made the statement in court. This account of him has acquired a special literary status in Bengali literature as the expression of a political prisoner (রাজবন্দীর জবানবন্দী). Nazrul wrote two revolutionary literary works on his way back from Comilla to Calcutta in December 1921. These two are the music of rebellious poems বিদ্রোহী কবিতা and broken song ভাঙ্গার গান. These completely changed the Bengali poetry and song genre. Nazrul was most famous for his rebellious poetry. Nazrul was sentenced to one year of heavy imprisonment after the trial on 18 January. Nazrul was taken to Alipore Central Prison. While living as a prisoner here (January 22, 1923), Nobel Prize winner Rabindranath (1861-1941), dedicated his spring lyric theatre to বসন্ত গীতিনাট্য গ্রন্থটি Nazrul. Nazrul was particularly pleased with this. While sitting in prison with this joy, he wrote the poem "The joy of creation today" আজ সৃষ্টি সুখের উল্লাসে.⁵²

In the new period, Nazrul was working in radio as well as journalism. At that time, he fell ill in 1942 and lost his Speech. In 1971, Bangladesh become independent and Poet Nazrul and his family were brought to Bangladesh on 24 May 1972 with the permission of the Government of India. The poet spent the rest of his life in Bangladesh. In 1976, an official order was issued to grant Nazrul Bangladeshi citizenship.

In 1976, Nazrul's health deteriorated further. He spent the last days of his life in Dhaka PG Hospital. He died on August 29, 1976. Nazrul wrote in one of his songs, "Bury me near the mosque, brother / Let me hear the voice of the muezzin from my grave", "মসজিদেরই পাশে আমায় কবর দিয়ে ভাই / যেন গোরের থেকে মুয়াজ্জিনের আযান শুনতে পাই". Considering this request of the poet, it was decided to be buried next to the central mosque of Dhaka University

⁵¹ Islam, Rafiqul. *Kazi Nazrul Islam*, http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Islam,_Kazi_Nazrul. Date of Access 09.09.2020

⁵² http://en.banglapedia.org/index.php?title=Islam,_Kazi_Nazrul 20.04.2020.

and his tomb was built accordingly. Nazrul Islam, the national poet of Bangladesh, translated the last part of the Qur'an into Bengali.⁵³

Although translating the Holy Qur'an into Bengali was the biggest dream of his life, he had to postpone the translation for a long time due to lack of time and Arabic knowledge. After working for many years and learning the Arabic-Persian language, he translated the Qur'an as a poem into Bengali and then commented that I feel lucky. He said that if someone with equal experience in Arabic and Bengali, translated the Qur'an as poetry, he would never dare or need to translate a great book like the Qur'an himself. Since the most accurate source of all sources of Islam is the Qur'an in Arabic, we as non-Arabs only love and kiss the Qur'an instead of reading and understanding it. We do not know about the blessings and jewels in the Qur'an. Today, this Qur'an contains its Hadith, Fiqh, etc. If more deserving people than me translate the resources into Bengali, it will bring endless prosperity to the Bengali Muslim community. It will be a means of salvation for the Bengali Muslims who have fallen into the abyss of ignorance. According to him: If the Qur'an is translated into simple Bengali verses, then most Muslims will be able to memorize it easily and benefit from the Qur'an.

“For this purpose, I tried to translate it as simply as possible. I cannot say that I have been very successful because I do not know if there is any other difficult task than translating the words of the Qur'an in a sound manner. Because my pen, my tongue, and my rhythm are not enough here to describe a great book like the Qur'an. However, I have tried to translate the Holy Qur'an into a language that can be understood by everyone, even Madrasah-School children. If they welcome my first attempt in this direction – I will find all my efforts fruitful.”⁵⁴

While Nazrul Islam was translating the Qur'an, he took help from the Mawlana Md. Ali's translation of the Qur'an, Tafsir-i-Hosainy, Tafsir-i-Bayzavi, Tafsir-i-Kebir, Tafsir-Azizi, Tafsir-Mawlana Abdul Hoque Dehlavi, Tafsir Calalayin, translation of Mawlana Muhammed Akram Khan and Mawlana Ruhul Amin. Mawlana Abdur Rahman Khan, owner of the famous 'Karim Bakhsh Brothers, and his son, Deputy Chairman of the Bengal Council, Mawlana Rezaur Rahman Khan, felt very lucky for the financial and moral support provided. Mawlana Mahammad Mamatajuddin Fakhrul, Mawlana Syed Abdur Rashid from Pabna, Iskander Gajanvi B.A., Mawlana K.M. Halal, its editor Abdul Majid Sahityaratna and many other scholars supported this translation. In his introduction, Nazrul commented that this translation might not have been so accurate had it not been for their help.

Nazrul made a poetic translation of only the last part of the Qur'an. He gave the name and meaning of every sura he translated, starting with the Fatiha and Nas Suras and ending with the

⁵³ Hay, Soyed Ali Ahsan, *Bangla Shahitter Itihash*, 120.

⁵⁴ Nazrul Islam, *Kavyo Ampara*, Nazrul Rochonabali, Dhaka: Bangla Academy 2007. V. 5, 117-171.

sura Naba, and in another section called sababe nuzul, the reason why thirty-eight suras were written separately. He also wrote down the number of verses and the number of words and letters in each sura. The poetic translation of the Qur'an made by Nazrul is well received by the public. Nazrul Institute General Manager Md. While introducing the book, Ershad Hossain said: "Kavya Am-Para' (কব্য আমপারা) is the translation of the thirtieth part of the Holy Qur'an. While working on this translation, Nazrul tried to learn a lot from Arabic and became interested in various translations of the Qur'an. The book was first published on 23 November 1933. A total of thirty-eight suras have been translated in this book. His contribution to balanced and meaningful translation while keeping the essence intact is unforgettable. The tafsir at the end of the book, which introduces the suras in the 'Shane Nuzul' section, shows that knowledge of Arabic, wisdom, and the ability to analyze hadith are very great."⁵⁵

Conclusion and evaluation

Although the knowledge of translating the 30th Juz of the Qur'an by Amiruddin Basuniya from the Rangpur district of Bangladesh in 1808 was widespread, Shah Muhammed Sagir (estimated. M.1400-1500) translated the Yusuf-Zuleyha story with a poetic translation of the Surah Yusuf in various sources. However, Girish Chandra Shen (1843-1910), a converted from Hinduism to Brahmanism, was credited for the first full translation of the Qur'an in Bangladesh. As an argument behind it, Girish Chandra Shen may have been advertised as the first translator as he was the first to translate and publish the entire Qur'an. A second reason is the planned focus of Brahmanism on the Girish Chandra.

For example, when an ordinary Muslim knows about the first translation of the Qur'an in Bengali done by Girish Chandra, then they attracted to the translation of the Qur'an translated by Girish Chandra, he reads the translation of Girish which is based on Brahmanism, thereby raising many questions about Islam and casting doubts about Islam by reading this erroneous translation. Girish Chandra's popularity grew as unconscious Muslims cooperated in their campaigns of Girish Chandra. However, parts of Girish's translation reflect his religious beliefs. Similarly, Christian missionary William Goldsack (1871-1957) translated the Qur'an into Bengali for the same purpose.

Apart from this, Naimuddin (1832-1908), Abbas Ali (1859-1932), Babur Ali (1874-1946), Khan Bahadur Taslimuddin Ahmed (1852-1927), Khandokar Abul Fazal Abdul Karim (1875-1947), Munshi Abdul Korim Boksh, Mawlana Rohul Amin 1892-1945), Abdul Hakim (1887-1957), Ali

⁵⁵ [http://islamibarta.com/article/Islamic-Literature-and-Culture/Book review: Kavvya Ampara](http://islamibarta.com/article/Islamic-Literature-and-Culture/Book%20review%3A%20Kavvya%20Ampara). Date of access 10.12.2020.

Hasan, Mawlana Mohammad Akram Khan (1868-1968), Fazlur Rahim Chovdri (1896-1929), Muhammed Nakibuddin Khan (1894), Mohammad Kudrat-i Khuda (1900-1977), Osman Gani, Kazi Nazrul Islam (1899-1976) were among the translators during this period.

Among these translations, Naimuddin is one of those who translated the Qur'an beautifully. However, he was able to translate 23 juz before he passed away. The first 10 of this 23 juz were published while he was alive. Other volumes (juz) were published by his sons after his death. Mawlana Abbas Uddin was one of the translators from West Bangal Cobbish Porgana and translated the Qur'an from beginning to end, but these translations are not available in the market. Mawlana Babur Ali (1874-1946) also translated the Qur'an from West Bangal Cobbish Porgana, but his translation was not published. Khan Bahadur Taslimuddin Ahmed (1852-1927), on the other hand, was from Darjeeling, West Bengal, who translated and published the entire Qur'an. Although the translation of the first three juz done by Rohul Amin (1892-1945) in West Bengal Cobbish Porgana has not been found, it shows that it was the correct translation in the sources. The Qur'an, which was fully translated by Abdul Hakim (1887-1957) and Ali Hasan, was completed after 17 years of study. This translation, which does not exist today, shows in the sources that it was a beautiful translation and the public can understand easily the translations in Bengali. Mohammad Akram Khan (1868-1968), who had various talents, had completely translated the Qur'an. Akram Khan was sometimes criticized by scholars for making his own interpretations apart from the interpretation in traditional translations and commentaries. Doctor Mohammad Kudrat-i Khuda (1900-1977) was from West Bengal Birbhum province and translated the Qur'an, but while translating and explaining the Qur'an, he translated the Qur'an from his own scientific point of view without following previous commentaries. It has been also criticized by scholars for some interpretations of the Qur'an that are contrary to traditional meanings.

As much as the songs and poems of Bangladesh's national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam are known to Bengali speakers, his poetic translation of the last Juz of Al-Qur'an is not so well known. But it is a remarkable work as a beautiful poetic translation of the Qur'an. He learned Arabic to do this translation. Went to different scholars to make his translation corrected. As such, Nazrul Islam's poetic translation has not been widely publicized which deserves research.

Many of the translations mentioned as the first Bengali translations are not available in the market today. Various researchers have given information that some translations are not properly preserved in Bengal but are available in the British Library. These translations should be widely distributed in the market in Bangladesh and research opportunities should be provided for Qur'an readers and researchers.

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